

the interface control system coupled to (1) a multiple port, multiple format processor for interfacing a substantial number of callers in any of a plurality of formats to concurrently process data and (2) a plurality of live operator stations with prompting capability, for a plurality of formats, said interface control system comprising:

call data means for receiving signal-represented call data signals
[relating to] from said terminals or from the communication facility;

selection means for selecting one of said formats under control of said call data means to thereby further specify any defined conditions for a connection of a call or maintaining connection of a call either to said multiple port, multiple format processor or one of said live operator stations, at least one of said formats having at least one specified test condition including testing against a file of data including [for] negative file data indicative of prohibitive use; and

interconnect switch means for providing format data and controlling connections from a calling remote terminal to a port of said multiple port, multiple format processor under control of said selection means or one of said live operator stations [**under control of said selection means**] in the event of negative file data.

18. (Amended) A system according to claim 1 further comprising:

test capability to specify other test conditions for certain of said formats and test compliance with the conditions to further control the interconnect switch means.

REMARKS

This communication is submitted in response to the office action dated January 23, 2001. Claims 1 and 18-27 are pending, all of which presently stand rejected. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested based on the amendments above and arguments urged below.

I. Rejection of Claims 1, 18, 20, 23 and 26 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

In paragraph 3 of the office action, claims 1, 18, 20, 23, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. section 103(a) as unpatentable over Masson et al. in view of Stephenson. The Examiner asserts that Masson discloses an interface control system (Masson's Fig. 2) comprising a call data means (Masson's channel banks 72). Also, the Examiner asserts that Masson discloses a selection means (Masson's system selects from a plurality of different applications ranging from simple information dissemination to automatic order entry with credit verification, order entry including operator assistance (Masson's col.2, line 40-49 and col. 5, lines 37-48)). Apparently Masson also discloses an interconnect switch means (Masson's digital cross-connect circuit 70; col. 4, lines 47 – col. 5, line 58). Accordingly to the Examiner, Masson differs from the claims in that although it does teach terminating the call connection when it has determined that a credit card is not authorized, it does not specify a test for negative file data. However, the Examiner believes that Stephenson teaches that aspect.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 here requires (1) *call data means for receiving signal-represented call data signals from said terminals or from the communication facility*; (2) *selection means for selecting one of said formats under control of said call data means to thereby further specify any defined conditions for a connection of a call or maintaining connection of a call either to said multiple port, multiple format processor or one of said live operator stations, at least one of said formats having at least one specified condition including testing against a file of data including negative file data indicative of prohibitive use*; and (3) *interconnect switch means for providing format data and controlling connections from a calling remote terminal to a port of said multiple port, multiple format processor under control of said selection means or one of said live operator stations in the event of negative file data.*

At col. 2, lines 40-48, Masson et al. merely indicate that their system “*may be used for a variety of applications ranging from simple information dissemination to automatic order entry with credit verification or charges, and as with credit verification or charges, and as a fully automated system without operator intervention or with as much operator intervention as desired for taking information such as addresses not readily remotely enterable to a touch tone keyboard and for assisting in special circumstances.*” Nowhere does Masson disclose

selecting one of these so-called “applications” under “control of the call data means” or their “channel banks 72.”

Moreover, the Examiner recognizes that Masson does not disclose “testing for negative file data.” Applicant submits that it is not just a question of “testing for negative file data” but, in fact, controlling connections to either a port of said multiple port, multiple format processor under control of said selection means or one of said live operator stations in the event of negative file data. Masson et al. disclose “operators who can interact with the caller and with the computer 76 to assist in entering data to the computer via the terminal by voice communication with a caller when the data, such as mailing address, is not readily enterable through the caller’s touchtone keypad, or for that matter, assisting the caller and/or the computer for any purpose when the two do not seem to be communicating as intended, such as the failure of a caller to enter any touch tone information when requested by way of a verbal prompt.” To that end, Masson seems to indicate the ability to “redirect” a call to a live operator for the reasons set forth above, rather than to satisfy the above noted requirement of Applicant’s claim.

Stephenson et al., on the other hand, disclose a credit verification system (dating back to 1973) comprising a multiplicity of point-of-sale terminals and a programmed central processing unit. Applicant respectfully submits that neither does Stephenson disclose the ability to control connections to either a port of the a port of said multiple port, multiple format processor under control of said selection means or one of said live operator stations in the event of negative file data.

Claim 1 is further amended to recite that the negative file data indicates prohibitive use.

Claim 18 is amended to require “other” test conditions. Claim 18 is dependent on claim 1, and therefore, allowable for at least the reasons urged above with respect to claim 1. Likewise, claims 20 and 26-27 ultimately depend on claim 1 and are therefore, allowable for at least the reasons urged above, with respect to claim 1.

II. Rejection of Claims 1, 22 and 24 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

In paragraph 4 of the office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 22, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the article by Hester in view of Stephenson. The Examiner asserts that Hester discloses an interface control system (Hester’s Fig. 1)

comprising call data means, selection means, and interconnect switch means (voice switch means, Fig. 1). The Examiner acknowledges that Hester differs from the claims "in that although it does teach credit card authorization, it does not specify the credit verification process as including testing for negative file data. Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has overlooked the requirement of the claims, which explicitly requires connection of a call to a port of said multiple port, multiple format processor under control of said selection means or one of said live operator stations in the event of negative file data

Neither Hester nor Stephenson, in combination or alone, satisfy, at the very least, this requirement of Applicant's claim 1. Hester's voice switch appears, from the limited disclosure, to have no capability of connecting a call either to a port of its automated system or its attendant terminal in the event of determining negative file data.

Claims 22 and 24 are dependent on claim 1 and allowable, at least for the reasons urged above with respect to claim 1.

III. Rejection of Claims 19, and 21 and 25 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masson in view of Stephenson, as applied to claim 18 and further in view of Britton et al. The Examiner relies on Britton for a teaching of time conditions. Applicant submits that because Masson and Stephenson do not satisfy claim 1, claim 19, which ultimately depends on claim 1, is also distinct.

With respect to claims 21 and 25, the Examiner asserts a combination of Masson, Stephenson, and Entenmann. Because claims 21 and 25 depend on claim 1, they too are distinct, by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Favorable consideration and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully
requested.

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